

SUN APR 13 1977

M - 177,087

E - 205,425

S - 344,023

# Helms's Professionalism Earns Him Wide Respect

New York Times News Service

Washington—Early in 1969, Melvin R. Laird, Secretary of Defense, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the Soviet Union was "going for a first-strike capability" in building new intercontinental missiles.

The committee also heard Richard McGarrath Helms, director of central intelligence, give a professional estimate that the Soviet Union was concentrating on defensive missiles.

June 23, shortly before the Senate began a debate on an anti-ballistic missile system, both men appeared at the same closed session of the committee to resolve the apparent difference.

## Helms Didn't Change

According to reports from some of those who attended the session, Laird retreated partly from his original position, while Helms deferred to the administration view without changing his earlier testimony.

This ability to keep intact his reputation while avoiding political fights makes Helms, 53, one of the most respected men in Washington.

"Helms is great with Congress," said a Senate staff official recently. "He admits when he doesn't know something. He never lies."

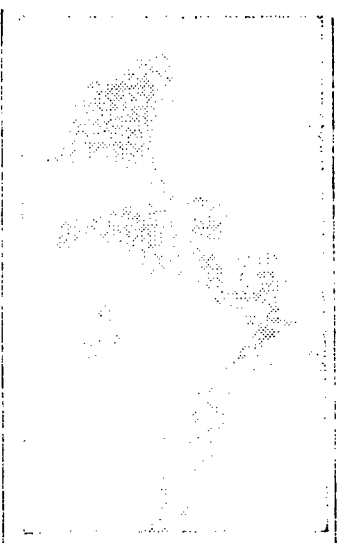
President Nixon went out of his way in May to emphasize that "Director Helms" played a key role in the administration as one of his advisers.

## First Public Speech

And, this week, many members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors appeared to consider it a great coup to get Helms to give his first public speech at their annual convention since becoming director of Central Intelligence in 1966.

Helms was born March 29, 1913, in St. David's, Pa., and raised in South Orange, N.J. He spent two high school years in Switzerland and Germany, learning French and German as well as social graces.

He was graduated from Williams College in 1935 with an



**RICHARD M. HELMS** outstanding record as Phi Beta Kappa, class president, school newspaper editor and yearbook editor. His classmates voted him "most likely to succeed," "most respected," "the one who had done the most for Williams," and "class politician."

## Interviewed Hitler

He went to Europe as a cub reporter with the United Press and soon made a name for himself by getting an exclusive interview with Hitler.

## Financial and personal problems

Helms cut short his career as a foreign correspondent, however, and he returned to the U.S. in 1937 as national advertising manager of the Indianapolis Times.

World War II was the turning point for Helms. He was assigned to the Office of Strategic Services because of his linguistic and other talents and has done nothing but intelligence work since.

After the war, he began to move up the ranks of the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency. Associates say it was his capacity for work, his patience, his knowledge and understanding of government and his "professionalism"—traits they say they still admire in him—that brought him quickly to a top position in the agency in the early 1950's.

## Heads CIA

He stayed near the top for nearly 15 years under such men as Allen Dulles, Richard M. Bissell, John A. McCone and Vice-Adm. William F. Raborn.

Then, in 1966, President Johnson named Richard Helms—he prefers his middle name not to be used—as director of central intelligence.

Besides the role of senior intelligence adviser to the president and the Congress, the job entails being chairman of the U.S. Intelligence Board and head of the CIA.

Helms was married several years ago to Cynthia McKelvie, 47. It is the second marriage for both. Helms has a son, Donald, who is a Washington lawyer. Mrs. Helms has four children by her previous marriage.

The Helms are frequently seen on the Washington social scene. Mrs. Helms once said that she and her husband like to relax by reading spy stories to each other.